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SUBJECT: CIVILIAN USE OF AL-UDEID AIR BASE IN QATAR

¶1. This message details policy on use of Al-Udeid Airbase in Qatar. Embassy Doha asks that it be made available to all USG travelers considering travel to or through Al-Udeid Airbase.

¶2. Al-Udeid Airbase is a Qatari - not American) military installation. It is sovereign Qatari territory and its use by USG personnel is governed by two bilateral agreements - the U.S.-Qatar Defense Cooperation Agreement and a separate Al-Udeid Implementing Agreement. Under these agreements, U.S. military personnel and DOD civilians with a Common Access Card (CAC) and official travel orders are permitted access to Al-Udeid. Personnel with other types of CACs, such as those marked "Federal Affiliate," are not covered by this agreement. Access to Al-Udeid by non-DoD USG civilians is at the discretion of the Government of Qatar.

¶3. Embassy Doha and CENTCOM frequently encounter difficult situations involving travelers arriving via milair at Al-Udeid Airbase (even for transit), or arriving in Doha expecting to depart via milair from Al-Udeid without advance coordination. The GOQ generally considers these incidents violations of our bilateral agreements. Cumulatively, they threaten to have a serious impact on our military operations in Qatar.

ACCESS TO AL-UDEID

¶4. All non-DoD USG civilians who wish to access Al-Udeid Airbase for purposes of visiting military facilities there or boarding a milair flight must have explicit advance authorization from the Qatar Armed Forces.

-- That authorization can normally be arranged by contacting the U.S. Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation at 011-974-488-4299 or the USAFCENT Host Nation Coordination Cell at Al-Udeid at DSN 318-437-6107; commercial at 011-974-436-2231; cell phone at 011-974-551-0815; fax at DSN 318-437-6121; commercial fax at 011-974-432-7793; or e-mail at 379aew.hn@auab.afcent.af.mil.

-- Personnel planning to transit Al-Udeid Airbase should contact the U.S. Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation at 011-974-488-4299 for further information.

-- Travelers must provide complete details of their itinerary and begin this coordination process at least 14 days in advance.

-- IMPORTANT NOTE: the GOQ now requires a copy of the data

page of travelers' passports in order to process these requests.

ARRIVING OR DEPARTING AL-UDEID VIA MILAIR

¶5. Unlike Doha International Airport, where single-entry visas can be purchased on arrival, the GOQ does not regard Al-Udeid as an international port of embarkation/debarkation and all non-DoD civilians arriving at Al-Udeid must have a multiple-entry Qatari visa in advance. Permission from the Qatar Armed Forces and Ministry of Interior is also required for immigration purposes.

-- This requirement applies to ALL/ALL Non-DoD civilians. This includes members of Congress and their staff, civilians (including press) accompanying U.S. military delegations, and federal civilians transiting into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

-- Personnel exiting from Al-Udeid using the single entry/exit "airport visa" obtained at Doha International Airport are not authorized to immigrate back through Al-Udeid (for example on the return leg of a milair trip to Iraq or Afghanistan).

-- Please note that ALL/ALL travelers, even military personnel and DOD civilians traveling with a CAC and orders, are required to process through Qatari customs and immigration at Al-Udeid just as they would at the

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international airport.

DON'T ARRIVE WITHOUT A VISA

¶6. Non-DoD civilians who arrive at Al-Udeid without a visa) or without advance approval from the GOQ to use Al-Udeid - are likely to be sent back on the next flight to their point of origin. There is a widespread belief that non-DoD civilians who arrive at Al-Udeid and never leave the base do not need a visa. While this has happened in the past, it is explicitly contrary to GOQ regulations and such cases are increasingly scrutinized by GOQ officials. Typically, the only cases of "transit without visa" tolerated by the GOQ are brief refueling stops or transits of a few hours or less during which the travelers never leave Al-Udeid's DV lounge.

¶7. In some cases, travelers arriving at Al-Udeid who did not obtain visas in advance from a Qatari Embassy have been able to obtain visas on-line at the GOQ's on-line services website (www.gov.qa). This system has not worked consistently, however, and travelers should not depart the U.S. without visas expecting to get an on-line visa upon arrival at Al-Udeid.

¶8. Personnel who, contrary to these guidelines, arrive at Al-Udeid without a visa and depart the base will be unable to either re-enter the base or depart from Doha International Airport. In such cases, the traveler will be required to correct their immigration status directly with the Qatari Ministry of Interior, risking fines, passport confiscation, or even detention.

¶9. Even with a valid single- or multiple-entry visa, non-DOD personnel MUST obtain permission from Qatar Armed Forces AND Ministry of Interior to immigrate through Al-Udeid. The Office of Military Cooperation Qatar requires seven-ten Qatari work days to ensure processing of the request.

FOREIGN NATIONALS

¶10. Access to Al-Udeid and arrival via milair at Al-Udeid by foreign nationals (i.e. non-U.S. citizens) must be coordinated by the relevant foreign mission in Doha directly with the Qatar Armed Forces. Only in extraordinary cases (e.g. senior officials of foreign governments) will the GOQ be responsive to requests by the U.S. Embassy to facilitate such travel.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

¶11. Active duty military and DoD civilian distinguished visitors and non-DoD civilians with additional questions should contact the U.S. Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation at 011-974-488-4299.

¶12. Active duty military personnel and DoD civilians with additional questions should contact the USAFCENT Host Nation Coordination Cell on Al Udeid at DSN 318-437-6107; by commercial at 011-974-436-2231; by cell phone at 011-974-551-0815; by fax at DSN 318-437-6121 or commercial fax at 011-974-432-7793; or by e-mail at 379aew.hn@auab.afcent.af.mil.
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